

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1266

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, PINT
SUBJECT: AMENDOLA'S VIEWS ON CURRENT ITALIAN POLITICAL ISSUES

1. VISITING YALE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR LA PALOMBARA GAVE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF A CONVERSATION HE HAD WITH PCI DIRECTORATE MEMBER GIORGIO AMENDOLA ON JANUARY 18TH. PALOMBARA BEGAN THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING AMENDOLA WHY THE PCI HAD QUICKENED THE PACE AND FORCED THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS. AMENDOLA REPLIED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL ASPECTS. FIRST, THE PCI IS HAVING PROBLEMS WITH ITS BASE AND WITH DGIL, THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED TRADE UNION. THE DEMAND FOR AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT AND MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT ON BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES, AS WELL AS LAW AND ORDER, WAS ESSENTIAL AS A GESTURE TOWARD THE DISCONTENT AT THE BASE. SECONDLY, THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT DID SEEM WORN OUT, INEFFECTIVE, AND UNWILLING TO PROCEED WITH ESSENTIAL LEGISLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, AMENDOLA SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S BEHAVIOR ON THE BUDGET SHORTFALL MADE LIFE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PCI. THEY HAVE GOTTEN ESTIMATES FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF A DEFICIT RANGING FROM 14,000 BILLION LIRE TO

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30,000 BILLION LIRE AND THEY SUSPECT THAT THE REAL FIGURE IS CLOSER TO THE 35,000 BILLION LIRE. IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS REFUSED TO GO FORWARD WITH A REAL AND NEEDED REFORM OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. (AMENDOLA DID NOT SAY WHAT REFORMS THE PCI WANTS, BUT WAS APPARENTLY REFERRING TO SOMETHING BROADER THAN THE POLICE UNION ISSUE.)

2.PALOMBARA ASKED AMENDOLA WHETHER THE BERLINGUER-AMENDOLA LINE RE THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND THE GRADUAL APPROACH IS FALLING APART. AMENDOLA REPLIED CRISPLY SAYING THAT "WE" (I.E., THE BERLINGUER GROUP) HAD PROPOSED THE BREAK WITH THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT THE PCI CAN ACCEPT TO RESOLVE THE PRESENT CRISIS, AMENDOLA STATED STRONGLY THAT THE PCI PREFERS AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT INCLUDING THE SIX PARTIES BUT IS OBVIOUSLY WILLING TO LISTEN TO PROPOSALS OF OTHERS. HE COMMENTED THAT THE PCI DOES NOT FEAR A DC THREAT OF ELECTIONS. THE PCI DOES NOT WANT ELECTIONS BUT WILL ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE IF IT IS MADE. HE SAID THAT THE RESULT WILL FORCE THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE EVEN MORE THAN DOES THE PRESENT SITUATION BECAUSE BOTH PARTIES WOULD GAIN IN THE ELECTIONS WITH AN EVEN GREATER POLARIZATION THAN THERE IS NOW. SIMILARLY, THEY DON'T TAKE SERIOUSLY A DC THREAT TO FORCE THE PCI INTO THE OPPOSITION SINCE, AFTER ALL, GOING INTO THE OPPOSITION WOULD NEATLY RESOLVE THE PCI'S PRESENT INTERNAL PROBLEMS.TURNING TO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, AMENDOLA SAID THE PCI WOULD NOT ACCEPT TECHNICIAN MINISTERS IF THEY CAME FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE ELECTED AS "INDEPENDENTS" ON THE PCI ELECTORAL LISTS. IN
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PARTICULAR THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT SPAVENTA BECAUSE THE US SEEKS SO ACTIVELY OPPOSED TO HIM. THE PCI MIGHT CONSIDER A PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE OTHER NON-DC TECHNICIANS AND MINISTERS IF IT WERE ACCCOMPANIED BY PUTTING THE PCI INTO PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

4. AMENDOLA COMMENTED THAT THE PSI IS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM THE DC TO JOIN AS A COALITION PARTNER OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. AMENDOLA STATED THAT THE PSI WILL NOT JOIN IN A NEW GOVERNMENT IF THE PCI DOES NOT AGREE. THE PCI WILL NOT AGREE IF IT IS EXCLUDED FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. AMENDOLA EXCLUDED A REWORKING OF THE FORMULA USED IN THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT THAT JUST FAILED. AS HE PUT IT, THE GOVERNMENT OF ABSTENTIONS IS FINISHED AND THE PCI WILL REQUIRE A GENUINE STEP FORWARD AS THE PRICE OF ITS COOPERATION FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. GARDNER

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